

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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President Obama on National Native American Heritage Month 2011

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
November 1, 2011

NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH,
2011

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

From the Aleutian Islands to the Florida Everglades, American Indians and Alaska Natives have contributed immensely to our country's heritage. During National Native American Heritage Month, we commemorate their enduring achievements and reaffirm the vital role American Indians and Alaska Natives play in enriching the character of our Nation.

Native Americans stand among America's most distinguished authors, artists, scientists, and political leaders, and in their accomplishments, they have profoundly strengthened the legacy we will leave our children. So, too, have American Indians and Alaska Natives bravely fought to protect this legacy as members of our Armed Forces. As service members, they have shown exceptional valor and heroism on battlefields from the American Revolution to Iraq and Afghanistan. Native Americans have demonstrated time and again their commitment to advancing our common goals, and we honor their resolve in the face of years of marginalization and broken promises. My Administration recognizes the painful chapters in our shared history, and we are fully committed to moving forward with American Indians and Alaska Natives to build a better future together.

To strengthen our economy and win the future for our children, my Administration is addressing problems that have burdened Native American communities for too long. We are working to bolster economic development, expand access to affordable health care, broaden post-secondary educational opportunities, and ensure public safety and tribal justice. In June, I signed an Executive Order establishing the White House Rural Council, to strengthen Federal engagement with tribal governments and promote economic prosperity in Indian Country and across rural America. This comes in conjunction with several settlements that will put more land into the hands of tribes and deliver long-awaited trust reform to Indian Country.

To bring jobs and sustainable growth to tribal nations, my

Administration is connecting tribal economies to the broader economy through transportation infrastructure and high-speed Internet, as well as by focusing on clean energy development on tribal lands. First Lady Michelle Obama's recently launched Let's Move! in Indian Country initiative will also redouble efforts to encourage healthy living for American Indians and Alaska Natives. These actions reflect my Administration's ongoing commitment to progress for Native Americans, which was reaffirmed last year when we announced our support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Through a comprehensive strategy where the Federal Government and tribal nations move forward as equal partners, we can bring real and lasting change to Indian Country.

This month, we celebrate the rich heritage and myriad contributions of American Indians and Alaska Natives, and we rededicate ourselves to supporting tribal sovereignty, tribal self-determination, and prosperity for all Native Americans. We will seek to strengthen our nation-to-nation relationship by ensuring tribal nations have a voice in shaping national policies impacting tribal communities. We will continue this dialogue at the White House Tribal Nations Conference held in Washington, D.C. next month. As we confront the challenges currently facing our tribal communities and work to ensure American Indians and Alaska Natives have meaningful opportunities to pursue their dreams, we are forging a brighter future for the First Americans and all Americans.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 2011 as National Native American Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to commemorate this month with appropriate programs and activities, and to celebrate November 25, 2011, as Native American Heritage Day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

Secretary Clinton Praises Turkey's Growing Power and Economic Leadership

By MacKenzie C. Babb | Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says Turkey's growing influence holds "great potential benefits" for its citizens and regional neighbors and is encouraging the country to take on a greater role as a global economic power.

"Turkey's economic leadership has the potential to support positive change far beyond Turkey's own borders," Clinton said in Washington October 31. "Turkey sends more than a quarter of its exports to nations in the Middle East and North Africa," she said, adding that Turkish businesses make up one of the largest sources of foreign direct investment in Egypt and are also helping to rebuild Iraq.

Clinton said this regional economic integration is critical, as political reforms across the Middle East and North Africa must be joined by economic reforms to succeed.

Speaking at the opening of the American-Turkish Council's annual conference, the secretary said the benefits of greater integration, as well as Turkey's capacity to support it, are "substantial." She added that the country's growing economic leadership is "key to helping integrate and modernize the economies of the Middle East and North Africa."

She said the country's economy has tripled in size during the past decade, thanks in large part to the Turkish people "whose talent, ingenuity and hard work made it possible." Clinton also credited the Turkish government for making important economic reforms.

"They opened the economy to foreign investment, curbed inflation, sought closer economic integration with Europe and extended development beyond the major cities," she said.

The secretary also praised the U.S.-Turkey partnership for playing a role in the country's economic growth, particularly the two countries' joint security efforts.

"Our work together in NATO has helped keep the shipping lanes of the Mediterranean open and safe. We faced down aggression in the Middle East. We helped bring stability and prosperity to the Balkans and Central Europe, allowing Turkey to establish profitable new trade and investment relationships," Clinton said. She added that the United States and Turkey are now focusing on expanding counterterrorism cooperation.

"Just as our alliance has contributed to Turkey's prosperity, that prosperity can in turn strengthen our alliance," Clinton said. The secretary said that for too long, the U.S.-Turkey economic relationship has lagged behind its security partnership. However, she said, that is beginning to change.

Clinton said in the first eight months of 2011 alone, U.S.-Turkey bilateral trade grew by nearly 50 percent. President Obama and Turkish President Abdullah Gul are working to further intensify this engagement through the joint Economic Partnership Commission, "which brings

together experts from across both governments to discuss everything from protecting intellectual property rights to boosting energy trade along the southern corridor to positioning Istanbul as an international financial center."

She added that both governments are working to involve more women in the process while engaging the private sector and civil society to leverage "new energy, innovation and resources."

The secretary spoke a day before Turkey's minister of national defense, Ismet Yilmaz, met with Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta at the Pentagon.

Eurozone Crisis Likely to Be Primary Topic at G20 Summit

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr. | Staff Writer

Washington — The current Eurozone financial crisis is likely to be the primary topic at the annual summit of the Group of 20 (G20) advanced economies, but the leaders are also expected to focus on measures set in place for strong, balanced and sustainable global economic growth, senior White House advisers say.

President Obama will attend the annual G20 meeting November 3-4 in the French resort of Cannes. It will be his fifth G20 summit, and will include a number of individual meetings with world leaders.

"The G20 agenda is critical to growing our economy here back at home, to strengthening the recovery, to increase exports and to create jobs," Deputy National Security Advisor Mike Froman said in a press briefing at the White House October 31 in advance of the president's travel to Europe. Froman advises the president on international economic affairs.

Froman said the world leaders will talk about the next stages of financial reform and momentum on G20 priorities — which include everything from development for security and infrastructure to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, fighting corruption, and strengthening the multilateral trading system.

"These summits, like many summits, really have three purposes: one, they're action-forcing events to make decisions; they are ongoing processes for getting work done below the leader level; and they're an opportunity for leaders to engage directly with their counterparts on the issues of the day," Froman said.

While in Cannes, Obama has scheduled a meeting with the L20, which is the group of international labor leaders who are in Cannes as part of the G20 program, said Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes.

Rhodes said Obama will begin individual meetings on November 3 with French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who is hosting the summit, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

"These are obviously the two largest economies in the Eurozone, and two leaders that the president has been in very close contact with over the last weeks and months about the issues that will be discussed at the G20 and about the situation in the Eurozone," Rhodes added.

After the G20 meetings end November 4, Obama is expected to meet with President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner of Argentina. The president is also expected to hold an additional meeting with Sarkozy before returning to Washington, Rhodes said.

European leaders have created a recovery plan to reduce Greece's debt by half, head off fears of a default and curb the Eurozone financial crisis. The plan announced by European leaders last week will lay a critical foundation for a durable solution to the crisis, Treasury Under Secretary Lael Brainard said at the White House press briefing.

"Obviously, the challenges facing Europe have significant implications for the U.S. economy and for the global economy," Brainard said. The plan contains a firewall to protect nations so they have access to financing as they reform their economies, she said.

The International Monetary Fund has been working closely with European Union officials and national leaders to work out the debt crisis plan. A crucial component of the plan is to prevent the current Eurozone crisis from spreading to other European nations.

"The EU is a critical anchor of global stability, and our single largest trading partner," Brainard told reporters. "Fortunately, Europe has the resources and the capacity to overcome these risks. We'll continue to support our European allies in their efforts to address this crisis, alongside the IMF and our G20 partners."

Brainard said the G20 will discuss financial reforms that have been sought for the past two years as the G20 nations have grappled with efforts to spur economic growth and put in place international measures to lessen the severity of future economic recessions.

"Stronger and more balanced growth, financial stability, these will be the key touchstones for the G20," Brainard said.

The G20 was formed in 1999 and includes 19 of the world's largest national economies and the European Union. The G20 countries represent about 90 percent of

the gross domestic product globally and nearly 80 percent of world trade. They also represent two-thirds of the world's population.

The G20 comprises the G7, formed in 1975, which includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, plus Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey and the European Union. Representatives also attend from international financial organizations such as the IMF and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

2012 U.S. Elections the First Influenced by "Super PACs"

By Stephen Kaufman | Staff Writer

Washington — Like it or not, Americans who seek election to the U.S. presidency or Congress need money — lots of money — to fund months of campaigning, advertisements and other ways to make themselves and their views more visible to voters, as well as to attack their opponents.

Recent legal rulings have opened new avenues for political spending by corporations, unions and nonprofit organizations, and the 2012 U.S. election cycle is gearing up to be the most expensive yet. Even though many Americans are outraged by the central role money plays in politics, others counter that supporting a candidate or an issue of their choice financially is a form of free speech.

The American electoral system is accustomed to political action committees (PACs), which are private groups that can raise up to \$5,000 from individuals to support particular candidates or issues. But the 2012 elections are the first to have so-called "super PACs," which are allowed to raise an unlimited amount of money from donors who can choose to remain anonymous. Although these organizations are not allowed to donate directly to individual campaigns or coordinate with candidates or political parties, the super PACs can use as much money as they can collect to promote whatever they like and attack their political opponents.

Super PACs are part of the American political landscape because of the Supreme Court's January 2010 decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, which affirmed the concept that "corporations are people." In other words, shareholders and other groups of people enjoy the same rights that they would have if they were acting as individuals. The court also ruled that the government cannot restrict how much such groups can spend to support or criticize political candidates.

In March 2010, a federal appeals court ruled that political

action committees can accept unlimited donations so long as they are not coordinating with or being directed by a campaign or political party.

Supporters of President Obama and many Republican presidential candidates such as Mitt Romney, Rick Perry and Herman Cain have all taken advantage of super PACs. The website OpenSecrets.org maintains a current list of all organized super PACs, as well as how much money they have reported to the Federal Election Commission.

Comedian Stephen Colbert has raised awareness among many Americans of the scope and power of super PACs by forming one of his own, and recently defined its message as supporting the “corporations are people” idea with his characteristic sarcasm.

VOTER UNEASE OVER ROLE MONEY PLAYS IN POLITICS

Opposition to the notion that corporations are people and the important role money plays in the American political system have been among the central messages of the Occupy Wall Street protests occurring across the United States.

The 2010 Supreme Court and federal appeals decisions reversed many provisions in campaign finance reform legislation such as the McCain-Feingold Act that were designed to limit campaign spending and add transparency to sources of political funding.

Those decisions and the creation of super PACS helped to bring the debate over campaign financing back to the surface for many Americans. And, thanks to the money available to super PACs, all Americans likely will be encountering more political ads during the 2012 campaign season.

What may be interesting for U.S. election watchers is to see whether the inability of PACs to coordinate with the campaigns themselves could result in inadvertent damage to the campaigns and the causes that the PACs seek to support. Broadcasting or printing messages that are mistimed or run counter to campaign communication strategies could do more harm than good.

But, even if super PACs are prohibited from coordinating with the candidates, the vast amount of money that they can provide will support campaigns with resources that candidates and even political parties might be unable to tap on their own.

Are super PACs an exercise in free speech or undue influence? American voters, directly or indirectly, will decide.

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